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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAMA 000842

SIPDIS

COMMERCE FOR ITA/MAC/ONE, CLOUSTAUNAU, AND THOFFMAN
STATE PASS USTR/JBUNTIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2015

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SUBJECT: FTA RATIFICATION EXPECTED BY LATE JULY

Classified By: A/DCM Hallie Hahn for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) The Council of Representatives (COR) Financial and Economic Committee approved the U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (FTA) June 8 and passed it to the full COR for consideration. MPs Jasim Abdul A'Al and Othman Sharif told PolOff that they expected the COR to ratify the FTA by the end of June, and for the upper house Shura Council to approve it before the summer recess, which is likely to begin in late July. (Note: Parliament cannot begin its summer recess, which is scheduled to start on June 15, until it passes the budget. Sharif and Abdul A'Al thought this process would take an extra six or seven weeks. End Note.) Abdul A'Al added that parliament also hopes to pass the Crown Prince's labor reform initiative before the recess.
MONROE